

**Written Testimony of Representative Steve Knight (CA-25)**

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

August 15, 2018

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in regards to H.R. 2156, the Saint Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Act. This bipartisan bill passed the House of Representatives unanimously on July 11, 2017, and mirrors S.1926 introduced by Senator Harris.

The collapse of the Saint Francis Dam on March 12, 1928 remains the second largest disaster in California's history and is considered to be one of the worst American civil engineering disasters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nearly twelve billion gallons of water were released due to the dam's failure and left disaster in its wake from the San Franciquito Canyon all the way to the Pacific Ocean 54 miles away. More than 431 lives were lost due to the resulting flood, and just recently 13 more of the disaster's casualties were identified by the area's local historical society.

Our nation's civil engineers learned from this tragedy, however, and brought important enhancements to their field and made critical improvements to dam safety. The failure of the St. Francis Dam subsequently changed methods to build new dams and set new safety standards across the nation, including for the construction of the Hoover Dam.

H.R. 2156 seeks to memorialize those that perished as a result of the St. Francis Dam Disaster and would create a 440-acre national monument managed by the U.S. Forest Service at the original dam site to honor those named and still unnamed that lost their lives in this tragedy. It is important not just for the present-day area of Santa Clarita, California, but also for our nation together to remember this tragic event of our past, and continue to learn from it.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to this significant legislation, and for your valuable efforts in moving it forward.